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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is threefold: (1) to explore differential/nondifferential code allocations for Spanish and English according to different domains of social interaction among Mexican-American college students; (2) to determine what linguistic and demographic variables are associated with differential usage patterns; (3) to relate the findings of this survey to those of other language-maintenance studies conducted among different Mexican-American subpopulations. Data for the study were obtained by mail questionnaires in the summer of 1974. One hundred and sixty-four students of Mexican descent, enrolled at The University of Texas at Austin, served as respondents. (Author)

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LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE AND LANGUAGE SHIFT AMONG MEXICAN AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS*

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The aim of this study is threefold: (a) to explore differential/non-differential code allocations for Spanish and English according to different domains of social interaction among Mexican-American college students; (b) to determine what linguistic and demographic variables are associated with differential usage patterns; (c) to relate the findings of this survey to those of other language-maintenance studies conducted among different Mexican-American subpopulations. Data for the study were obtained by mail questionnaires in the Summer of 1974. One hundred and sixty-four students of Mexican descent, enrolled at The University of Texas at Austin, served as respondents. (Author)

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Language retentiveness among the Mexican American population in the Southwest has been consistently described as high, whether in absolute terms or in relation to other immigrant groups in the United States (Fishman 1966, Grebler, Moore, Guzman 1970). Measured by any of the possible criteria of retentiveness, the claim is undoubtedly true. The external strength of Spanish, that is, the number of mother-tongue claimants--mother tongue is defined by the U.S. Census as language spoken in the respondent's home during his childhood in addition to or to the exclusion of English--could hardly be any higher among foreign stock Mexican Americans. Virtually all foreign-stock Mexican Americans reported Spanish mother tongue in 1970.

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TABLE 1

Mother Tongue of the Foreign Stock by Country of Origin

MEXICO							
Native of foreign or mixed parentage				Foreign born			
Total	Spanish	English	Other & not reported	Total	Spanish	English	Other & not reported
1,579,440	1,455,896	85,210	48,334	749,711	746,987	4,057	8,667

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Department of Commerce, PC 92-12, 1970 Census of Population: National Origin and Language (June 1973).

While the Census mother tongue statistics are subject to many limitations and potential distortions as they do not necessarily refer to the language actually learned or used by the respondent himself; do not contain any reference to the respondent's developmental or current linguistic proficiency; and give preference to the non-English tongue (regardless of frequency of usage) when both English and another tongue are reported, the data do enable us to judge the absolute and/or relative strength of non-English mother tongues within different subpopulations (Fishman 1966, Lieberson 1966, Thompson 1973). Other Census data also permit us to assess the relative frequency of Spanish mother tongue claimants within different Spanish origin subpopulations of foreign stock. Disregarding for the moment the fact that these subpopulations may and do differ greatly in pre-immigrational and post-immigrational background as well, and therefore might only nominally be the same, we can nevertheless observe that second generation Mexican Americans are more retentive of their mother tongue than those of the other two Spanish origin subgroups.

TABLE 2

Mother Tongue by Spanish Surname, Country of Origin and Nativity

	Native of foreign and mixed parentage		Foreign born	
	Sp. Surname	Not Sp. Surname	Sp. Surname	Not Sp. Surname
Mexico	81.7%	13.4%	87.3%	11.7%
Cuba	50.1%	31.2%	72.2%	26.5%
Other America	36.1%	33.3%	54.3%	39.9%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Department of Commerce, PC (2)-1D, 1970 Census of Population: Persons of Spanish Surname, (June 1973).

The 1970 Census, unfortunately, contains no mother tongue data for the entire Mexican American population. A comparison between third and second generation language loyalty therefore, is not directly possible. If however, one turns to the other identifiers used in the 1970 Census which provide information for all persons of Spanish ancestry in the Southwest, it would seem that language retentiveness has been high regardless of generational distance. Nearly all respondents of Spanish heritage--which is the largest category--are of Spanish language as well. The Spanish language category comprises all Spanish mother tongue responses in addition to those in which either the household head or the wife had claimed Spanish mother tongue. Although the data may or may not be indicative of current facility and/or language usage, it is nevertheless highly suggestive of uninterrupted generational transmission of Spanish.

TABLE 3

A Comparison of the Results of Several Measures of Persons of Spanish Speaking Background in the Southwest

	Sp. Surname	Sp. Language	Sp. Heritage[1]	Sp. Origin	Mex. Origin
Arizona	211,585	306,609	333,349	265,006	240,025
California	2,222,185	2,738,513	3,101,589	2,368,748	1,856,841
Colorado	245,390	255,994	286,467	225,506	103,584
New Mexico	324,248	379,723	407,285	308,340	119,049
Texas	1,663,567	1,981,861	2,059,671	1,840,862	1,619,252

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Department of Commerce, PC (SI)-30, 1970 Census of Population: Spanish Ancestry, (Feb. 1973). 1/ The PC (1)-C, General Social and Economic Characteristics, for each State, Table 49.

The data also may be suggestive of stable bilingualism in the Southwest, whether in fact it has been established or not. Since the Census provides no information on the respondents' developmental and/or current linguistic proficiency for either Spanish or English, one must turn to other potential sources to determine the current internal strength of Spanish, that is, the extent to which it is still spoken as an only or additional language. Although the data available to assess Spanish proficiency among Mexican Americans is limited to samples from San Antonio and Los Angeles, and seems to be confined to the twenty to forty age bracket, it is not unreasonable to assume that it may be roughly indicative of the linguistic competence of Mexican Americans of the same age group in other metropolitan

settings as well (Grebler et al. 1970).[1] Since metropolitan settings have a far greater disrupting effect upon traditional norms and language maintenance itself than urban or non-urban settings, we may expect the findings of this study to give us an approximation of the over-all Spanish proficiency of Mexican Americans in these latter miliuex also. Needless to say, such an overgeneralization carries with it the likelihood of grossly distorting the facts, but the distortion is more probable to occur in relation to estimating English than Spanish proficiency. Metropolitan centers enhance the possibilities of adding English, wheras non-urban and non-metropolitan settings in the Southwest are more likely to inhibit it while favoring the retention of Spanish.

The results of Grebler's large-scale study, which measured bilingualism by conversational fluency, show that by this measure, more respondents were comfortable in Spanish than in English. Vast majorities in both cities, 84% in Los Angeles and 95% in San Antonio, were comfortable in Spanish, as opposed to 71% in Los Angeles and 57% in San Antonio, who were also comfortable in English. The chances were, however, greater in San Antonio than Los Angeles that an individual comfortable in English could also express himself with ease in Spanish. Thus, some fluency in Spanish characterizes overwhelming majorities in both cities. The study further indicates that neighborhood composition and social-class factors--as measured by income--have an independent effect on an individual's fluency in either language. Higher-income respondents in Los Angeles who live in neighborhoods containing few if any fellow ethnics, are more likely to have greater competence in English than in Spanish. Conversely, almost half of the low-income respondents in Los Angeles and even more in San Antonio, who live in ethnic neighborhoods, not only are more proficient in Spanish but have very limited if any proficiency in English. Although the assumption of widespread retentiveness and the Census data are further validated by Grebler's findings, these indicate also that social-class differentials, which have militated against language maintenance among other immigrants groups, are presently operant among subgroups of the Mexican American population as well. Grebler's study further demonstrates that a more or less coordinate bilingualism is far from a reality among Mexican Americans in the two settings studied. Greater Spanish proficiency characterizes the majorities in both cities. It would, therefore, seem that if language maintenance did succeed in the Southwest--which it has--it

[1]While there is no indication of the respondent's ages, we assume that age may have spanned anywhere from twenty to forty because language usage patterns of the respondents with their children--not grandchildren--were reported in that section.

must have been primarily because of the lack of English proficiency in this subpopulation, and its limited range of internal differentiation (until recently), rather than because of a hypothetical cultural norm, ideological conviction or elaboration (Hayden, Fishman & Sawyer 1965).

While it is evident that Spanish has maintained its internal and external vitality in the Southwest to a unique degree, and that its staying power is still very strong not only because of the low socioeconomic profile of its speakers but a host of other factors as well, it cannot be assumed that language loyalty will remain as strong today as it has been in the past. The increasing interaction of Mexican Americans with the mainstream society and its tongue, the increased potential for social mobility within the socioeconomic structure of the Southwest itself, in addition to the internal differentiation that exists within the minority group today, tend to make such an assumption questionable.

The purpose of this study is to explore the degree of stability and change in both language proficiency and language usage patterns within a highly mobile segment of the Mexican American population in Texas, College students. It is hypothesized that if bilingualism and a diglossic speech situation prevail--that is, differential code-allocations for Spanish and English according to different domains of social interaction--that a stable bilingualism has in fact been established. Under those conditions one may expect language maintenance to be insured for an indefinite time. If on the other hand, in spite of bilingualism, language choice should primarily be determined by the linguistic ability of the interlocutors rather than by the sociocultural context of the speech situation, one may conclude that a stable bilingualism does not obtain.

Bilingualism without diglossia tends to be transitional. Language shift tends to co-occur as proficiency in the dominant tongue increases within a given subpopulation. In general, language shift among non-English mother tongue immigrant groups in the United States has occurred in the context of rapid urbanization, industrialization or other internal/external social changes (Fishman 1972).

Since Mexican American College students represent a minority within the minority group itself in relation to educational attainment and upward mobility, the findings of this study cannot therefore be generalized beyond an equivalent subpopulation. It is expected, nevertheless, that by taking into consideration several dimensions relevant to the topic a somewhat better understanding of the factors that influence language maintenance and/or language shift among this population today may be gained.

SAMPLE POPULATION

One hundred and sixty-four students of Mexican descent, roughly one fourth of the minority population enrolled at The University of Texas at Austin, served as respondents. The sample population showed a wide range on several important demographic variables: father's educational attainment and occupational status, provenance and generation of residence in the United States. Educational attainment of the fathers varied from none to graduate and/or professional training; one-third had completed their secondary studies, nearly half had completed primary school; fourteen percent had College and/or some professional training; and only five percent had no schooling at all. Except for College training, the mothers of the respondents had similar educational backgrounds to those of the fathers. The educational attainment of the respondent's parents, as may be expected, is considerably higher than that of the minority population in Texas or the Southwest. Occupational status of the fathers ranged from that of unskilled laborers to professionals. The mean occupational category was, however, low. It was represented by skilled laborers. When compared to the mean occupational status of Mexican Americans in Texas, which is that of unskilled laborers, it was nevertheless higher. Provenance of the respondents and their parents was represented by metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas with both a very high and a relatively low concentration of the minority group.

While half of the respondents had been born in metropolitan areas, three-fourths of the parents were of non-metropolitan procedence. Current residence in metropolitan settings, on the other hand, was claimed by three-fourths of the respondents. Even though these trends reflect the increasing migrations of Mexican Americans to large urban communities, they are not as prevalent among the minority population in either Texas or the Southwest. The majority of Mexican Americans are urbanized today, but when metropolitan dwelling is used as a yardstick of urbanization, they are still the least metropolitan population group in the Southwest. Most of them reside in small cities rather than large urban centers.

Nativity spanned from foreign-born, native of foreign parentage to native-born respondents of native parentage. One-half of the sample population was of foreign stock and the other half of native parentage. Compared to the nativity status of the minority group in Texas, the sample population contained a larger percentage of foreign stock (Grebler et al. 1973). The ratio of males versus females in the sample, was nearly two to one.

TABLE 4

Demographic Information on the Sample Population

	Total N	Percent
Sex	164	100%
1. Male	104	63.4
2. Female	60	36.6
Student Status*		
1. Sophomores	17	10.4
2. Juniors	32	19.5
3. Seniors	79	48.2
4. Graduate	33	20.1
5. Other	3	1.8
Employed		
1. Yes	93	56.7
2. No	71	43.3
Financial Aid		
1. Yes	89	54.3
2. No	75	45.7
Civil Status		
1. Single	110	67.1
2. Married	48	29.3
3. Divorced	6	3.7
Current Residence		
1. Metropolitan Texas with more than 40% Mexican American population	60	36.6
2. Metropolitan Texas with less than 20% Mexican American population	74	45.1
3. Non-metropolitan Texas. Towns with more than 50% Mexican American population. (Includes border towns, South Texas and Valley).	9	5.5
4. Non-metropolitan Texas with 50% or more Mexican American population. (Away from border areas).	2	1.2
5. Non-metropolitan Texas with 20% to 50% Mexican American population. (South and South Central areas).	11	6.7
6. Non-metropolitan Texas with 5-10% Mexican American population. (North, Northeast, Northwest, and North Central areas).	2	1.2
7. Other U.S. States	3	1.8
8. Texas, non-specific	1	0.6
9. No data	2	1.2

*Since the data was collected in the Summer there were no freshmen in the sample.

TABLE 4 (continued)

Demographic Information on the Sample Population

	Total N	Percent	Total N	Percent	Total N	Percent
	164	100%	164	100%	164	100%
Birthplace	Respondent		Father		Mother	
1. Metropolitan Texas with more than 40% Mexican American population.	64	39.0	36	22.0	36	22.0
2. Metropolitan Texas with less than 20% Mexican American population.	20	12.2	4	2.4	11	6.7
3. Non-metropolitan Texas. Towns with more than 50% Mexican American population. (Includes border towns, South Texas and Valley).	24	14.6	21	12.8	18	11.0
4. Non-metropolitan Texas with 50% or More Mexican American population. (Away from border areas).	16	9.8	17	10.4	20	12.2
5. Non-metropolitan Texas with 20% to 50% Mexican American population. (South and South Central areas).	16	9.8	26	15.9	20	12.2
6. Non-metropolitan Texas with 5% to 10% Mexican American population (North, Northeast, Northwest, and North Central).	6	3.7	4	2.4	6	3.7
7. Other U.S. States	7	4.3	10	6.1	1	0.6
8. Mexico	10	6.1	38	23.2	38	23.2
9. Texas, non-specific	1	0.6	7	4.3	5	0.3
10. No data			1	0.6	1	0.6

TABLE 4 (continued)

Demographic Information on the Sample Population

	Total N	Percent	Total N	Percent
	164	100%	164	100%
Parent's Educational Achievement	Father		Mother	
1. None	8	4.9	14	8.5
2. Primary	70	42.7	66	40.2
3. Secondary	58	35.4	71	43.3
4. College	13	7.9	10	6.1
5. Graduate and Professional	10	6.1	1	.6
6. No data	5	3.0	2	1.2
Parent's Occupational Status				
1. Outside of Workforce (disabled, deceased, retired and umemployed).	40	24.4	113	68.9
2. Unskilled Labor, Lesser Services (unskilled and semi-skilled laborers, agriculturalists, lesser services).	16	9.7	10	6.1
3. Skilled Labor, Intermediate Services.	49	29.8	12	7.3
4. White Collar	23	14.0	21	12.8
5. Technicians, Professionals and Managers.	30	18.4	6	3.6
6. No data	6	3.7	2	1.2
Generation of Residence in the United States	Respondents			
1. First generation (respondent, father and grandfather foreign born).	10	6.1		
2. Second generation (respondent native born, father foreign born).	71	43.3		
3. Third generation (respondent and father native born, grandfather foreign born).	43	26.2		
4. Fourth generation (respondent, father and grandfather native born).	39	23.8		
5. No data	1	.6		

METHOD

The data on all pertinent variables, linguistic and demographic, was collected by mail questionnaires during the Summer of 1974. The items were pretested twice and revised in order to avoid ambiguity. Four hundred questionnaires were mailed to students attending the first Summer session. The questionnaire was accompanied by a covering letter which explained the researcher's interest in learning more about Mexican Americans' language usage and requested the recipient's participation, while pointing out that his/her anonymity would be fully preserved. A letter of sponsorship by the Mexican American Studies Center was included. The rate of responses for those questionnaires reaching the addressees was close to 45%, a high rate by any standards for mail questionnaires.

LANGUAGE USAGE

Each respondent was asked to rate what proportion of his/her talk in the following domains of social interaction--the home, neighborhood, church, Mexican American organizations, among friends and on Campus--was in Spanish/English when speaking to other Mexican Americans who were bilingual. In all domains, excepting two, subjects were asked to rate language usage patterns with interlocutors who were older, the same age, and younger than themselves. For example, within the family domain respondents were asked to assess the degree to which they used Spanish/English with grandparents, parents, and younger relatives, and to note the proportion of Spanish/English each family domain interlocutor used when speaking to them. Age of interlocutor was not asked in connection with usage patterns at church and ethnic organizations, because at present interlocutors would most likely be individuals of the same age-group.

In addition to ratings for overt speech patterns in the domains mentioned, ratings were also requested for covert, inner speech; for projected usage with the respondent's future mate and children; and for receptive usage through mass-media contact. Inner speech was estimated in terms of daydreaming when making plans for the future, silent prayers, letting off steam, and thinking about someone with whom the respondent was angry. Mass media contact was assessed by radio and television usage, movie attendance, newspaper and magazine reading.

Language usage ratings were made on a six point scale ranging from only Spanish, mostly Spanish, as much Spanish as English, to mostly and only English.

LINGUISTIC VARIABLES

Linguistic proficiency evaluations were obtained for the respondents and some of the family domain interlocutors. Each respondent was asked to evaluate his oral Spanish proficiency on a four point scale ranging from full knowledge, to partial, poor and none. In addition, each subject was asked for information pertaining to language dominance developmentally and currently, that is, early childhood usage versus current linguistic facility in both Spanish and English.[2]

The subjects were also requested to estimate the Spanish/English proficiency of parents and grandparents in terms of their conversational ability. Conversational ability was assessed on a three point scale ranging from proficiency in both Spanish and English, to little or no ability in one language or the other.

DATA ANALYSIS

The following processing operations were performed on the data: (1) a varimax orthogonal factor analysis which yielded a five factor solution; (2) analyses of variance on each factor in order to test for the relationship of linguistic and demographic variables upon differential factor scores; (3) contingency tests when appropriate. Contingency tests were used to determine: (a) the continuity/discontinuity between the respondent's first language spoken and current language dominance; (b) the reciprocity/non-reciprocity of usage patterns between different age-groups. Language-usage categories were combined in order to increase the frequencies. In this case, gamma was also used to assess the degree of reciprocal/non-reciprocal usage. The strength of association between (c) language study and current Spanish proficiency, and (d) nativity status and Spanish proficiency were also examined through contingency tests.

RESULTS

LANGUAGE USAGE PATTERNS

The results of the factor analysis performed show that intergenerational differences are far more potent in determining language choice among Mexican Americans than the socio-cultural context of the speech situation, or

[2]The language-usage questionnaire was based, to a large extent, on the questionnaire developed and used by Fishman et al. in the Puerto Rican Study. See Bilingualism in the Barrio, 273-283.

TABLE 5

The Five Factors

Factor	Name
R_1	Language Usage with grandparents
R_2	Language Usage with the parents' generation
R_3	Language Usage with age peers, younger interlocutors, inner speech, and projected usage with a family of one's own
R_4	Language Usage in the academic domain and at Mexican American organizations
R_5	Mass Media Contact

TABLE 6

High Loading Items on Factors

Loading	Text
	R_1: Language Usage with grandparents
.84	Respondent to grandfather
.85	Grandfather to respondent
.89	Respondent to grandmother
.86	Grandmother to respondent
	R_2: Language Usage with the parents' generation
.69	Father to respondent
.76	Respondent to father
.77	Mother to respondent
.75	Respondent to mother
.67	Respondent to older relative
.60	Older relative to respondent
.62	Respondent to older neighbor

Loading	Text
	R_3: Language Usage with age-peers, younger interlocutors, inner speech and projected usage with a family of one's own.
.67	Respondent to siblings
.68	Respondent to younger relatives
.62	Younger relatives to respondent
.64	Respondent to same age neighbors
.69	Respondent to younger neighbors
.70	Respondent to friends
.63	Respondent to girlfriend/boyfriend
.65	Confession
.68	Inner prayers
.72	Letting off steam
.79	Daydreaming
.77	Anger
.70	Projected usage with mate
.56	Projected usage with own children
	R_4: Language Usage in the academic domain and at Mexican American meetings.
.78	Respondent at Mexican American organizations
.67	Respondent with students on Campus
.53	Respondent with professors on Campus
	R_5: Mass Media Contact
.66	Radio broadcasts
.78	Television broadcasts
.71	Movie attendance
.71	Readings of magazines and newspapers

TABLE 7

Mean Usage Scores in Factors

	R_1 Grandparents	R_2 Parents's Generation	R_3 Age Peers, Inner speech, Projected usage with own family
Mean	1.755	2.921	3.801
Std. Dev.	.968	1.199	.846
Number	95	126	128

	R_4 Academic domain, Mexican American organizations	R_5 Mass Media Contact
Mean	4.347	4.378
St. Dev.	.630	.584
Number	151	156

Scale:

1. All Spanish
2. Mostly Spanish
3. Spanish and English with equal frequency
4. Mostly English
5. All English

TABLE 8

Respondent to Grandfather	Grandfather to Respondent: All/mostly Spanish	Half Spanish/ half English	All/mostly English	Totals
All/mostly Spanish	96.4%	0%	0%	(54) 77.1%
Half Spanish/ half English	1.8%	100%	0%	(6) 8.6%
All/mostly English	1.8%	0%	100%	(10) 14.3%
Totals	80.0%(56)	7.1%(5)	12.9%(9)	(70)100.0%

Chi square = 119.16667 d.f. 4 $p < .0000$
Gamma = .98773
Kendall's Tau B = .91978

TABLE 9

Respondent to Grandmother	Grandmother to Respondent			Totals
	All/mostly Spanish	Half Spanish/ half English	All/mostly English	
All/mostly Spanish	95.0%	0%	0%	(77) 81.9%
Half Spanish/ half English	2.5%	0%	0%	(2) 2.1%
All/mostly English	2.5%	100%	100%	(15) 16.0%
Totals	86.2%(81)	3.2%(3)	10.6%(10)	(94)100.0%

Chi square = 79.45512 d.f. 4 $p < .0000$
Gamma = 1.
Kendall's Tau B = .85284

TABLE 10

Respondent to Father	Father to Respondent			Totals
	All/mostly Spanish	Half Spanish/ half English	All/mostly English	
All/mostly Spanish	74.2%	6.7%	2.2%	(49) 35.5%
Half Spanish/ Half English	19.4%	46.7%	4.3%	(28) 20.3%
All/mostly English	6.5%	46.7%	93.5%	(61) 44.2%
Totals	44.9%(62)	21.7%(30)	33.3%(46)	(138)100.0%

Chi square = 108.92938 d.f. 4 $p < .0000$
Gamma = .93146
Kendal's Tau B = .75093

TABLE 11

Respondent to mother	Mother to Respondent			Totals
	All/mostly Spanish	Half Spanish/ half English	All/mostly English	
All/mostly Spanish	74.4%	5.7%	0%	(60) 38.7%
Half Spanish/ half English	17.9%	51.4%	2.4%	(33) 21.3%
All/mostly English	7.7%	42.9%	97.6%	(62) 40.0%
Totals	50.3%(78)	22.6%(35)	21.1%(42)	(155)100.0%

Chi Square = 129.38936 d.f. 4 $p < .0000$
Gamma = .94482
Kendall's Tau B = .76047

family versus non-family distinctions. Usage patterns between the respondents and their grandparents, parents and age peers constitute three separate factors. (See Tables 5, 6, and 7.)

Factor I represents usage patterns with grandparents. The highest Spanish frequency distributions are obtained here. The vast majority of the respondents, 80%, claim to use only or mostly Spanish. Language choice in this sphere of interaction is, however, mostly determined by the linguistic proficiency of the older interlocutors, rather than by any hypothetical cultural norm. The majority of grandparents, 68%, have little or no English competence. In view of the fact that little if any choice obtains, it is not surprising to find that usage patterns between the two age groups are highly reciprocal. Even-though the respondents receive significantly more Spanish than they use themselves, agreements in usage patterns prevail to an overwhelming extent over disagreements.[3] (See Tables 8 and 9.)

Factor II represents linguistic usage with parents, older relatives and older neighbors. While Spanish frequency distributions in factor II are the second highest, these are substantially lower than in factor I. Only 34% of the

[3]Although the frequencies in these two contingency tests were too small in some cells, and therefore the results could be misleading, it is doubtful that in this particular case they would be given the limited English proficiency of the first generation.

respondents claim to use only or mostly Spanish, as opposed to 40% who claim only or mostly English, and 22% who claim both languages with equal frequency. Contingency tests indicate that the respondents also receive significantly more Spanish from the parents, particularly from their mothers, then they use with them, but reciprocity in usage patterns prevails nevertheless over non-reciprocity. (See Tables 10 & 11.)

Usage pattern with the parents' age-group are substantiated by claims regarding the respondents' first language spoken: 32% of them claim English mother tongue; 50% claim Spanish and 22% both Spanish and English. Since roughly one-third of the subjects have been socialized in English and one-fifth in both languages, and reciprocal usage between parents and respondents prevail in all instances, there is no evidence that language shift is a deviation from adult standards, but the contrary, that it is equally applicable to the respondents and the older generation as well.

Factor III represents usage patterns of the respondents with age peers and younger interlocutors in familial or intimate interactions. It includes usage patterns with siblings, younger relatives, neighbors--of roughly the same age and younger than the respondents--, friends, girlfriends and boyfriends. Projected usage with a family of one's own is intercorrelated with, and hence predictive from, overt speech patterns with age peers. This, however, is truer in relation to projected usage with spouses than offsprings. The factor loading on this last variable is not very high, .56, and therefore the correlation with the other variables in factor III is not as strong. Frequency distributions show that the respondents have somewhat overestimated their projected Spanish usage with offsprings if their current linguistic behaviour with peers is taken as a measure. Nearly half of them have claimed that they intend to use both languages with equal frequency. The bias in favor of Spanish did not occur in relation to projected usage with spouses. It was assessed rather realistically inasmuch as it was consistent with current linguistic behaviour among age peers. Covert speech patterns, which included daydreaming, silent prayers, and anger are also intercorrelated with overt speech among age peers, and thus are predictive from them. Confession, which is essence deals with inner life events, was also represented in this factor.

Usage patterns between respondents and younger relatives are also characterized by a high degree of reciprocity. This suggests that linguistic proficiency in these two age-groups must be similar.

TABLE 12

Younger relative to respondent	Respondent to Younger Relatives: All/mostly Spanish	Half Spanish/ half English	All/mostly English	Totals
All/mostly Spanish	89.4%	3.0%	2.9%	(21) 13.5%
Half Spanish/ half English	5.3%	87.9%	6.7%	(37) 23.7%
All/mostly English	5.3%	9.1%	90.4%	(98) 62.8%
Totals	12.2%(19)	21.2%(33)	66.7%(104)	(156)100.0%

Chi Square = 203.2812 d.f. 4 $p < .0000$
Gamma = .93977
Kendall's Tau 3 = .80456

In overt speech with peers, inner and projected speech with spouses, Spanish has however been displaced by English and code-switching. Only 8% of the respondents claim only or mostly Spanish usage, as opposed to a majority, 68%, who claim mostly English, and 24% who claim usage in both Spanish and English with equal frequency. The fact that inner speech should be intercorrelated with overt speech among age peers suggests that there is little, if any, internal resistance to language shift among this subpopulation. It also corroborates the assumption that the almost exclusive usage of Spanish with the first generation responds to communicative needs rather than to actual choice.

The language-usage patterns claimed by the respondents when interacting with peers in intimate and familial domains, are consistent with their claims regarding current linguistic dominance. While there are significant between-group differences in relation to current bilingual proficiency, depending upon first language spoken, only 5% of the sample population claims currently to be Spanish dominant. The majority, 75%, claims to be more proficient in English than in Spanish, and only 20% claim a more or less coordinate bilingualism. Of those who claim Spanish mother tongue, (50%), 30% claim equal facility in both Spanish and English; 62% greater proficiency in English and 9% greater facility in Spanish. Among those who were

raised bilingually (18%), 27% claim equal facility in both Spanish and English, 70% English dominance, and 3% greater facility in Spanish. As expected, those who claim English mother tongue, (32%), are almost universally English dominant, 98%, with a mere 2% claiming equal proficiency in both languages.

TABLE 13

Current Language Dominance	First Language Spoken			
	Spanish	English	Both	Totals
Spanish	9%	0%	3%	5% (8)
English	62%	98%	70%	75% (123)
Both	29%	2%	27%	20% (33)
Totals	50% (82)	32%(52)	18% (30)	100% (164)

Chi Square = 32.84163 d.f. 4 $p < .000$

Language usage patterns among family domain interlocutors show that Spanish and English are not accorded differential functions. They also show the lack of linguistic continuity among age-groups. Grandparents, parents and the respondents constitute three linguistic subgroups segregated along generational lines. Intergenerational discontinuity is obtained both in terms of Spanish/English frequency and Spanish/English proficiency. Almost exclusive Spanish usage prevails in verbal interactions with the first generation. With the second generation, Spanish is claimed less often than English and code-switching, when the latter are combined. The vast majority of grandparents, 68%, as opposed to only 18% of the parents, has little or no proficiency in English. The majority of the respondents, on the other hand, are more proficient in English than in Spanish, although they still command considerable knowledge of Spanish as their usage patterns with the first and second generations attest.

Factor IV represents usage patterns in non-intimate domains, with students and professors on campus, and at ethnic organizations. Three-fourths of the respondents claim to use English almost exclusively, 22% both Spanish and English, and a mere 3% all or mostly Spanish. The

significant decrease of Spanish in the educational domain and at ethnic organizations in comparison with usage patterns, factor III, is not surprising given the public saliency of the speech situations, and the fact that the respondents cannot be expected to have the required lexical and syntactic range in Spanish to discuss with ease more abstract topics. This is evident when usage with professors is considered. The factor loading on this variable is only .53. Frequency distributions indicate that with professors English claiming prevails to an even large extent than with students, which explains the low factor loading of this variable.

TABLE 14

Spanish Proficiency

	Percentages	Number
Full knowledge	11.6	19
Considerable knowledge	61.6	101
Little knowledge	24.4	40
None	2.4	4
Totals	100.00	164

Factor V represents mass-media contact, also a domain under private control. It includes television and radio broadcast usage, movie attendance and the reading of newspapers and magazines. Only one-eighth of the subjects claim to have media contact in both languages. The others claim almost exclusive contact with English mass media.

VARIABLES RELATED TO DIFFERENTIAL USAGE PATTERNS

Of the information obtained by the personal background section of the questionnaire, the following demographic and linguistic variables were studied in relation to language usage patterns: the respondent's current linguistic proficiency; birthplace of the respondent and his parents; current residence of the respondent's family; the father's educational attainment and occupation, and nativity status. Sex differences, which were also considered and found to be associated with differential Spanish/English claiming, will be discussed elsewhere. They are not explained by linguistic-proficiency and demographic characteristics, therefore warrant special attention.

The results indicate that the respondent's linguistic proficiency, his birthplace and that of his father, are all significantly related to differential usage patterns in all spheres of interaction excepting the academic/organizational and mass media domains. The only variable which proved to be always significantly related to usage variance is the mother's birthplace, when birthplace was categorized as metropolitan and non-metropolitan procedence and concentration of the Mexican American population was taken into account as well. When the effects of the respondent's, his father's or mother's birthplace were examined merely in terms of metropolitan versus non-metropolitan procedence, they proved far less revealing, being non-significant in many instances as well."

Those respondents who were born (and spent their childhood) in non-metropolitan areas in which the minority group constitutes half or more of the total population, behave linguistically either as foreign born respondents-- with the parents' age group and grandparents-- or have higher bilingual usage scores-- with age peers-- than foreign born subjects themselves and any other subgroup. Respondents born in metropolitan areas in which the ethnic group ranges from zero to twenty percent of the total population, had the lowest Spanish scores, and conversely, tended to have the highest English scores. Respondents from metropolitan areas containing large concentrations of Mexican Americans, forty percent or more of the total population, tended to claim less Spanish than non-metropolitan respondents, but more so than subjects from metropolitan settings in which the minority group is less predominant. These results are consistent with indices of segregation in metropolitan areas, which depend upon the size and visibility of the ethnic group. Segregation tends to be lowest in those urban centers where Mexican Americans do not constitute a sizeable proportion of the total population. Conversely, it is highest in urban areas which have large concentrations of the ethnic group.

Neither current residence of the respondent's family, nor the father's occupational status, was significantly associated with differential usage patterns. The lack of association between language-usage patterns and recent residence may either be due to the restricted range of variance of the latter (the vast majority of the subjects claim currently metropolitan residence) or to the fact that

"Tables of the analyses of variance performed are not reported here because of editorial restrictions on paper length. Significance levels of the independent variables ranged from .05 to .001.

shift of residence did not occur for the majority until after early childhood.

The lack of association between differential linguistic usage and the father's occupational status, may, on the other hand, respond to the following causes. Large percentages of Mexican Americans in Texas, and elsewhere in the Southwest-particularly those in the lower occupational categories-tend to have coworkers who are also Mexican Americans. Individuals in higher occupational categories, on the other hand, may or may not have left the ethnic community, spatially, emotionally or professionally. Mexican American professionals have in the past taken both options. Some have chosen to remain loyal to and active within their own ethnic communities, while others have left it in the process of occupational mobility. While the differences in language usage are not significant, statistically speaking, the following trends have been consistently observed in all factors. English claiming is always highest among those respondents whose fathers have white-collar status, rather than among those whose fathers are professionals. On the basis of external evidence, one is inclined to conclude that this would be the case among Mexican Americans. White-collar workers have in the past tended to leave the ethnic community in the process of occupational mobility (Grebler et al. 1970). Spanish retentiveness would therefore seem to be least likely within this subgroup. While the father's occupational status was not statistically significant in relation to differential linguistic behavior, his educational attainment was. It proved significant in differential usage patterns with grandparents and the parents' age group, and almost reached significance in all other instances as well. Respondents whose fathers had the least schooling tended to have the highest Spanish scores. But respondents whose fathers had only completed secondary, rather than college studies, tended to have the highest English scores. This is consistent with usage patterns when these were examined in terms of the father's occupation.

Nativity status, whether categorized as a four-way variable ranging from first through fourth generation, or as a two-way variable, including foreign versus native stock, failed to be significantly associated with differential Spanish/English usage in all instances. The somewhat unexpected lack of association between generational distance and linguistic behaviour among Mexican Americans must be a reflection of their geographic and social immobility, and consequent near-total isolation from the mainstream society until a generation ago. In the light of these perspectives, nativity by itself, without taking other factors into

consideration, would seem to be of little value in assessing presently Spanish/English proficiency and usage differentials among this population.

Although no analyses have been performed as yet to determine which of the variables found significant in relation to differential language patterns are the most powerful, it would seem from the results obtained thus far, that the parents' and respondent's birthplace, and the father's educational attainment are the most important. While these findings may seem trivial, they are not insofar as natural causes alone would seem to explain language retentiveness: limited schooling, compactness of settlement of the same ethnic group, and non-metropolitan procedence. Compactness of settlement, however, may be more determining than metropolitan versus non-metropolitan procedence in itself, at least in south Texas. Both parents and respondents who spent their early years in non-metropolitan and metropolitan settings containing vast segments of fellow ethnics, are the most retentive subgroups. Subsequent residential shift, if and when occurring after childhood or early adolescence--when linguistic competence and patters of interaction are consolidated--would seem to be of little consequence upon differential linguistic behaviour. Individuals continue to interact in terms of previously habitualized patterns.

While it is entirely probable that by controlling for the father's and/or mother's education, birthplace of the parents and/or respondent, would cease to be significantly related to Spanish retentiveness, it is nevertheless no accident that the non-metropolitan subgroup should have the highest Spanish-usage scores. The education gap and social distance between Mexican and Anglo Americans is greatest in non-metropolitan communities in southern Texas. An individual's birthplace, if and when coinciding with residence in the early years of his life, would thus, be very likely to have a definite impact upon his linguistic proficiency and usage, subsequent educational success, and in the end, on his social mobility as well.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study corroborate to a large extent the uninterrupted intergenerational transmission of Spanish, implied by Census data, and claimed by many other sources also. There is little doubt that some proficiency in Spanish characterizes virtually all of the respondents, regardless of nativity status and first language spoken. Even those subjects who claim English mother tongue have acquired

some proficiency in it. We assume that it must have been through continued exposure to grandparents, older relatives and/or older neighbors, since language study in high school is not significantly related to Spanish proficiency differentials. Although nearly all of the respondents still speak Spanish as an additional language, it is equally evident that their current dominant tongue, by and large, is English and that language shift is underway among them. The extent and pace of language shift, as seen previously, is not the same for all the subgroups studied. Social class differentials, as measured by educational attainment, and social distance from the mainstream society, as measured by procedence and compactness of settlement, account for the differences already noted. In spite of the between-group differences previously described, the evidence of language shift is not scant but considerable. Spanish and English do not have differentiated functional allocations in those spheres of interaction where a choice is given. Intergenerational differences, resulting from language proficiency differentials are far more potent in determining language choice than institutional domain distinctions, and/or any hypothetical cultural norms. Both languages are used in the home and both were claimed as first languages spoken developmentally. Spanish claiming for the population studies is primarily associated with oral use in informal familial and neighborhood interactions with older interlocutors. In familial and intimate face to face interactions with age peers and younger interlocutors, in current overt and covert linguistic dominance--regardless of whether Spanish, English or both languages were claimed as mother tongues--and in mass media contact, English and code-switching have displaced Spanish. As may be expected, in domains not under private control, English claiming is even higher.

The contention of language shift presented here is further sustained by external data concerning other Mexican American subpopulations in different settings. From these external sources it becomes clear that language shift is ongoing among other subgroups as well, if the lack of functional differentiation between Spanish and English is accepted as a criterion of language shift. While in some of these studies no claims are made to that effect, in the light of the data presented it is obvious that differential usage patterns according to domain distinctions, if they ever existed among Mexican Americans, have vanished or are vanishing. English and code-switching are beginning to or already have invaded the domain most under private control, the home (Grebler et al. 1970, Cornejo 1973, Patella &

Kuvelsky 1968, Skrabanek 1967, Thompson 1971).

The results of the lack or loss of differential role compartmentalization for Spanish and English, is further corrobobrated by the phonetic, semantic and syntactic variables of Southwest Spanish. Even Espinosa's early studies of New Mexico Spanish document linguistic transfer from English and more recent research shows that phonological, lexical and syntactic incorporation from English into the Spanish code--on a habitualized rather than sporadic basis--is a rule rather than exception, especially among the younger generations (Espinosa 1917, Phillips 1967, Solé 1975).

Evidence of language shift among Mexican Americans would not be of major interest in itself, were it not for the fact that only a generation ago this minority group was considered unassimilable and alien to the American way of life. Insofar as language shift among this minority seems to procede primarily in proportion to upward mobility within the larger sphere of American society, as has been the case for most other non-English immigrant groups, one may expect Spanish retentiveness to decrease as upward mobility increases.

It should not, however, be inferred from this statement, that an imminent displacement of Spanish is likely to occur in the immediate future. Upward mobility for the total Mexican American subpopulation in the Southwest is unlikely to become an imminent reality. If one considers that social mobility among this ethnic minority, as measured by income, has not proceded from one generation to the next, but that it has taken for Mexican Americans as much as three generations to approximate the income status of the general Southwestern population, then both language shift and socioeconomic progress are far from crystalizing. Other factors reinforce that supposition as well. Mexican Americans remain one of the most conspicuous examples of geographic concentration among national minorities in the United States. The uninterrupted flow of immigrants--one of the important sources of language maintenance--has thus far not ceased. Thirty-five percent of all families in this minority group live at or below the poverty level. Twenty-eight percent are for all practical purposes functional illiterates. Vast majorities are still concentrated in low-skill occupations and low-opportunity settings. The economy or ecology of the Southwest itself can hardly absorb such vast numbers of unskilled workers in the immediate future.

Nevertheless, in comparison with the past, there is evidence of progress. While progress may be too slow to make

a sudden impact, it is ongoing. Today's younger generations have a higher educational attainment and occupational status than their parents. They are linked to city life, whereas their ancestors were largely rural dwellers. Spatial segregation from the mainstream society, whether in residence, at work or school, while still high in some settings, is decreasing in others. Signs of assimilation in value orientation and other spheres of life are also becoming evident (Grelber et al. 1970). If assimilation in other areas is beginning to take place, one may expect that linguistic assimilation will occur as well. Spanish language maintenance will undoubtedly persist in the Southwest for several decades, but it can hardly remain as unfaltering in the future as it has been in the past.

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